

Message Text

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41

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9300

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2189

FOR POPPLE FROM CROSS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, BGEN, HK

SUBJECT: APCAC MEETING

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT DUTCH VANGESSEL WILL BE HEADING THE TAIPEI DELEGATION TO THE APCAC CONFERENCE IN HONG KONG MARCH 6-8. I WONDER IF YOU COULD HAVE A QUIET WORD WITH DUTCH AND REMIND HIM THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT THE DISPLAY OF SYMBOLS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN CONNECTION WITH A CONFERENCE WHICH HAS THE OFFICIAL SANCTION OF THE HKG. THERE APPARENTLY IS A REAL FEAR ON THE PART OF THE HKG OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE POLAD'S OFFICE, THAT A REPUBLIC OF CHINA FLAG OR SOME SIGN STATING THEY WERE THE AMCHAM OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA MIGHT TURN UP IN PUBLIC, ON TV, OR IN A NEWSPAPER PICTURE. OUR HONG KONG AMCHAM ARE UNDERSTANDABLY ANXIOUS NOT TO OFFEND THE HOST GOVERNMENT AND WE HAVE OFFERED TO HELP AVOID ANY POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A SITUATION.

2. THERE WILL IN FACT BE THREE OCCASIONS WHEN THE MATTER IS OF SOME CONSEQUENCE. THE FIRST OF THESE WILL BE THE WELCOMING ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG ON SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 6. BOB MILLER DELIVERS A SPEECH AT A PUBLIC LUNCHEON THAT DAY AND ON MONDAY, MARCH 8, THERE WILL BE A PRESS CONFERENCE FEATURING THE APCAC OFFICERS AND THE INDIVIDUAL HEADS OF DELEGATIONS.

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3. THE HONG KONG CHAMBER'S PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS CALL FOR

ONLY TWO FLAGS TO BE DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE, THE US AND THE UK, AND BADGES AND DELEGATES NAME PLACQUES ARE TO USE THE NAMES OF THE CITIES FROM WHICH THE DELEGATES COME. ONE WOULD THINK THESE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM, BUT SOME PEOPLE FEEL THERE IS A REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME TAIPEI DELEGATION MEMBERS MIGHT WISH TO MAKE A PUBLIC POINT OF THE FACT THAT THEY REPRESENT THE AMCHAM OF THE ROC. TO REINFORCE ITS POINT, THE HKG HAS SENT THE HONG KONG AMCHAM A TOUGH LETTER WHICH STATES THAT THE CONFERENCE IS MOST WELCOME BUT THAT IT IS "CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD" THAT THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC MANIFESTATION OF SYMBOLS OF THE ROC.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THIS, NORM AND I DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE SURE THAT THE TAIPEI DELEGATION UNDERSTANDS THE SCORE AND THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSPECTION. WE WILL LEAVE IT TO YOU HOW TO GET THIS POINT ACROSS, BUT I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS THAT WHEN THE BRITS GET UP-TIGHT ABOUT SOMETHING, IT IS WORTH PAYING ATTENTION EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS A LITTLE RIDICULOUS.

5. WARM REGARDS.
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